

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD – 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Senate – May 14, 2020

COMMEMORATION OF THE 105th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I want to join my friends in the Armenian community in solemnly observing the 105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. While we could not commemorate the Armenian Genocide in Rhode Island as we normally would due to the pandemic, I know we are united in our belief in the bright future and resilience of the Armenian people.

More than a century ago, one of the worst tragedies of the 20th Century began when the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire executed more than 200 prominent Armenians. What followed was an eight-year campaign of massacre and oppression. By 1923, an estimated one and a half million Armenians were killed and over a half a million survivors were exiled.

These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and across the globe. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during this dark time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., unsuccessfully pleaded with President Wilson to take action, and later remembered the events of the Genocide, saying, “I am

confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.”

Those who survived the Armenian Genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit. Survivors of the Armenian Genocide contributed greatly to the lands in which they established new homes and communities, including the United States. That is why we not only commemorate this grave tragedy each year, but also take the time to celebrate the traditions and the contributions of the Armenian people. Indeed, my home state of Rhode Island continues to be enriched by our strong and vibrant Armenian-American community.

I was pleased when a resolution to encourage the U.S. to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide passed the Senate in December. We must find a way to come together to recognize the truth of what happened, and support and assist those facing persecution today.

As Ranking Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I also remain committed to supporting assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and foster democratic reforms and development.

As we remember the past, we remain committed to forging a brighter future. We must continue to guard against hatred and oppression so that we can prevent such crimes against humanity from happening again.

Thank you.